

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 14755

E.O 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EG
SUBJ: WAFD LEADER ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: WAFD LEADER ALLEGES ALEXANDRIA BY-ELECTION
VIOLENT AND DISHONEST. SALEM'S RECOGNITION OF HIS
UNPOPULARITY SAID TO BE ONE OF FACTORS BEHIND CRACKDOWN.
PA SPEAKER MAREI AND OTHER CENTER PARTY MEMBERS REPORTEDLY
NOT IN FAVOR OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. ACCORDING MURAD,
DISSOLUTION WAS ONLY COURSE OPEN TO WAFD; CHALLENGING
LEGISLATION'S CONSTITUTIONALITY TERMED IMPRACTICAL. SADAT'S
RECENT ACTIONS SAID RESULT FROM FRUSTRATION OVER PEACE
PROCESS, ANNOYANCE AT ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION AND TO
PREPARE GROUND FOR UNPOPULAR ECONOMIC REFORM. END
SUMMARY.

1. DURING COURSE OF HOUR AND HALF TALK WITH EMBOFF
JUNE 8, WAFDIST PARLIAMENTARY LEADER HELMI MURAD MADE
FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST. ALEXANDRIA BY-ELECTION
WAS BOTH VIOLENT AND DISHONEST. CENTER PARTY CANDIDATE
SUCCESSFUL ONLY BECAUSE OF MASSIVE FRAUD. SALEM'S
RECOGNITION OF HIS UNPOPULARITY SAID TO E ONE OF CON-
TRIBUTING FACTORS TO SUBSEQUENT CRACKDOWN.

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2. MURAD DESCRIBED SALEM AS AMBITIOUS, SUSPICIOUS IN-
DIVIDUAL, WITH INCREASING INFLUENCE ON PRESIDENT. CLAIMED
SALEM WISHES SUCCEED SADAT. WAFD LEADER POINTED OUT
(CORRECTLY) THAT PM CONSISTENTLY HAS OPPOSED CREATION
OPPOSITION PARTIES. SAID SALEM, LIFE-LONG POLICEMAN,
HAS CONSPIRATORIAL THEORY OF HISTORY AND VIEWS VIRTUALLY

ALL EGYPTIANS AS REPRESENTING REAL OR POTENTIAL THREAT. PM, HE CLAIMED, MAINTAINS DOSSIERS ON ALL LEADING EGYPTIANS.

3. ACCORDING MURAD, ASSEMBLY SPEAKER MAREI AND OTHER MEMBERS CENTER PARTY DO NOT FAVOR RECENT DEVELOPMENTS BUT CONSIDER THESE ILL-ADVISED, UNSEEMLY AND AS REFLECTING POORLY ON MAJORITY PARTY'S ABILITY TO GOVERN. HOWEVER, MURAD ADMITTED THEY HAVE NOT EXPRESSED THESE MISGIVINGS PUBLICLY.

4. MURAD SAID WAFD'S DISSOLUTION GEARED TO EMBARRASSING GOVERNMENT INTERNATIONALLY BUT ARGUED THIS WAS ONLY COURSE LEFT OPEN. CLAIMED PARTY UNABLE CHALLENGE LEGISLATION IN COURT AND WOULD HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT MANIPULATION HAD IT REMAINED IN EXISTENCE IN ANY FOR.. SAID FACT THAT GOVERNMENT SEEKING CONTROL PARTY PRESS ORGANS MEANS OPPOSITION WOULD NOT HAVE HAD EFFECTIVE VOICE. PARTY WILL SEEK TO REESTABLISH ITSELF IN FUTURE, BUT FOR FOR MOMENT WAFD INTENDS LAY LOW. MEMBERS WILL OPPOSE EXPULSION ABDUL FATAH HASSAN FROM ASSEMBLY (ONLY PRE-1952 WAFD MINISTER IN PARLIAMENT) BUT WITH NO HOPE OF SUCCESS. (INTER ALIA, MURAD EXPLAINED EGYPTIAN LEGAL SYSTEM MAKES IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CHALLENGE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF LEGISLATION. IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION, HE MAINTAINED, CLEVERLY DRAFTED TO AVOID

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GIVING OPPOSITION OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN JUDICIAL REVIEW.)

5. MURAD DID NOT THINK LEFT PARTY "SUSPENSION" PLOY WOULD WORK. LEFT TOOK THIS OPTION, HE SAID, IN REALIZATION PARTY COULD NOT GATHER NECESSARY 20 MP-'S TO REESTABLISH IF IT DISSOLVED. HOWEVER, MURAD CLAIMED ASU LIKELY ORDER DISSOLUTION, OR FORCE PURGE WHICH WILL TRANSFORM LEFT INTO TAME ORGANIZATION.

6. ASIDE FROM BLAMING SALEM, MURAD SUGGESTED CRACKDOWN RESULTED FROM SADAT'S FRUSTRATION OVER LACK OF PROGRESS IN PEACE PROCESS, HIS ANNOYANCE AT ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION, AND OUT OF REALIZATION THAT HE WILL HAVE TO ADOPT UNPOPULAR MEASURES TO CURB INFLATION. MURAD (A PROFESSIONAL ECONOMIST) THOUGHT LAST POINT PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT. IFM STAND-BY AGREEMENT, HE SAID, WILL REQUIRE GOE TO TAKE STRINGENT MEASURES IN COMING MONTHS MURAD THOUGHT UNPOPULARITY OF THESE MEASURES REQUIRE POLITICAL CHANGE. REPEATING PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED SENTIMENT, MURAD PREDICTED JULY 23 "SURPRISE" WILL BE SADAT'S DISMISSAL OF SALEM, WITH PRESIDENT TAKING OVER PREMIER-
#80.

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7. AT CONCLUSION MEETING, MURAD SAID LIBERALIZATION IN EGYPT NOT DEAD. CLAIMED SADAT, HAVING INITIATED PROCESS, WILL FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE REVERSE COURSE. WITHOUT SAFETY VALVE, PRESIDENT WILL FIND IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CONTAIN DOMESTIC PRESSURE WITHOUT EXPLOSION. SADAT, HE SAID, WILL HAVE TO ALLOW FREER POLITICAL EXPRESSION OR FACE DANGER OF SEVERE DOMESTIC UNREST.

8. COMMENT: MURAD'S FOCUS ON ECONOMIC EXPLANATION FOR REPRESSION IS REASONABLE, BUT PROBABLY GIVES PRESIDENT GREATER CREDIT FOR ECONOMIC ACUMEN THAN HE DESERVES. WE QUESTION WHETHER THIS WAS PRINCIPAL CONCERN AND WONDER WHENEVER GOE PREPARED IMPOSE STRINGENT CONTROLS. MURAD EXPOSITION CLEARLY CRAFTED FOR U.S. CONSUMPTION AND PRESENTED RECENTLY DISSOLVED WAFD AS REASONABLE, CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION PARTY. MURAD WHOLLY IGNORED FACT THAT, TO AT LEAST SOME EXTENT, WAFD PROVOCATIONS INVITED CRACKDOWN HE NOW DEPLORES. EILTS

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